



FREE

Santa Monica Daily Press

May 7-8, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 151

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

7 16 20 44 45
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: \$56 Million

FANTASY 5

13 18 25 32 37

DAILY 3

Daytime: 1 8 4
Evening: 6 5 5

DAILY DERBY

1st: 10 Solid Gold
2nd: 12 Lucky Charms
3rd: 06 Whirl Win

RACE TIME: 1:44.91



NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Northern Ireland's chief constable told reporters in January that the meticulously executed December robbery of Belfast's Northern Bank earned the thieves (who the constable believes are Irish Republican Army members) the equivalent of about US\$50 million, but that because of a peculiarity of the U.K. banking system, Northern Bank can, and will, legally cancel and replace all the currency that was taken, rendering the stash, in the constable's words, "the largest theft of waste paper in the history of Northern Ireland." If the robbers hadn't taken so much money, the cancellation might not have been a worthwhile option.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 127th day of 2005.
There are 238 days left in the year.

On May 7, 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Rheims, France.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"Real stories, in distinction from those we invent, have no author. Although history owes its existence to men, it is not 'made' by them."

HANNAH ARENDT

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The mane event



Fabian Lewkowicz/Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monica Police officers keep watch at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel on Friday while Occidental Petroleum Corp. stages its annual meeting inside. Security was in place in the case of protesters, who never showed. Former U.S. Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, was elected to the board of directors.

School district lending an ear to Unity group

Officials welcome fresh ideas to curb school violence

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

MID CITY — School officials have agreed to meet with community members who have developed their own plan to address issues related to violence at Santa Monica High School.

A newly-formed group of Santa Monica residents calling themselves the Unity Coalition insist the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District must institutionalize anti-racist practices and hold itself accountable for achieving results to ease recent tensions at Samohi. Meanwhile, SMMUSD officials laid out their own plan at Thursday's school board meeting to address a recent series of fights at Samohi involving mostly black and Latino participants.

District officials also committed to meeting with the Unity Coalition to see how their ideas might contribute to the district's plan.

The two proposals came in the wake of an April 15 brawl at Samohi resulting in a school-wide lockdown, which required assistance from three police agencies to secure the area. Although the fights involved

See SAMOHI, page 5

De la Torre stands behind April visit

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

MID CITY — A school board member who visited Santa Monica High School with two men appearing to be gang members, blames miscommunication for the resulting controversy, but stands by his methods to assuage campus violence.

Oscar de la Torre was publicly criticized by the Santa

See SCHOOL VISIT, page 8

Growing pains in city's plots

BY LESLIE ANNE JONES

Special to the Daily Press

MAIN STREET — For a handful of Santa Monicans, watching their gardens grow is the only way living in LA's concrete jungle is tolerable. So when they learned their small slices of earth may be taken away by City Hall, they came out in force to defend their garden plots.

There is a limited amount of recreational space in Santa

Monica, and a half acre of it is reserved for garden plots that City Hall leases to Santa Monica residents. But now those plots are in jeopardy as City Hall reconsiders how it manages the community gardens, located on the north end of Main Street.

About 30 gardeners last month defended their plots in front of the Santa Monica Parks and

See GROWING PAINS, page 4



Kim Calvert/Special to the Daily Press

Small garden plots leased to local residents are in jeopardy as City Hall decides the future of the community gardens on Main Street.

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Santa Monica Daily Press



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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Your expenses demand your attention. You might have made an error that could jeopardize a major purchase. Your innovative style helps you come up with unusual answers. Friends could mean well but only confuse the issue. Try to understand their real message. Tonight: Your treat.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Friends surprise you with some unusual plans or ideas. Why don't you go along for the ride? Fun surrounds you if you are willing to let go and relax. Your perception of someone who is important in your life could be distorted. Try being more realistic, for both of you. Tonight: As you like it.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Realize when you need to vanish. Sometimes others mean well but only confuse the issue. Learn to gather facts on your own. Plans involving an authority figure could radically change. Tonight: Cocoon, with or without a favorite person.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Focus on the majority rather than on individuals. Recognize when someone is yanking your chain. This behavior might not be intentional. Give him or her the benefit of the doubt as you handle an upcoming issue. Tonight: Throw or go to a party.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Others make demands that you might not be up to meeting. Explain, but don't expect everyone to be happy. Your perspective and personality are more in demand than you realize. You might need to go along with a loved one's desires. Tonight: In the limelight, whether you want to be or not.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Learning to take an overview could be important. Visualize and create more of what you want in a key relationship. Significant others have a way of acting in a most unanticipated manner. Don't react, if possible. Tonight: Take in a movie, concert or some other form of mind escape.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Extremes mark your interactions with others. You cannot always anticipate what will happen next — even you are prone to unexpected spontaneity. Realize that others need a greater sense of control. Tonight: Go along with another's request.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You cannot always dictate your terms. In fact, quite clearly, others are in control right now. Recognize your limitations. Right now, let someone close reveal his or her inner desires. Lying back will allow you to get to know this person better. Tonight: The only answer is "yes."



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Celebrate the warmer days and spend some time outside. You might want to garden, plan a barbecue or get into a fun game of ball. Think in terms of new possibilities, following the natural theme of spring. Tonight: What you thought was predictable might no longer be.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You might have a sudden case of spring fever. Recognize what is happening with a neighbor or with someone you communicate with on a regular basis. The unexpected comes forward. Tonight: Be playful.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Your sense of direction could be very important when dealing with those you really care about. Confusion marks the next few days. You only see what you want to see right now. A family member might not be deceptive. Tonight: Entertain quietly.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You could easily sabotage yourself. Stop and think before giving in to impulsiveness. You need a different perspective. Others often feed you information you want to hear. Be discerning rather than naive. Tonight: At a favorite spot.



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1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401 • www.smdp.com

PUBLISHER

Ross Furukawaross@smdp.com

EDITOR

Carolyn Sackariasoneditor@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER

Ryan Hyattryanh@smdp.com

SANTA MONICA PARENTING

Nina Furukawanina@smdp.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Robbie P. Piubenirob@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Rob Schwenkerschwenker@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Stewart O'Dellstewarto@smdp.com

TRAFFIC MANAGER

Connie Sommervilleconnies@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Alejandro Cesar Cantarero IIalex@smdp.com

CLASSIFIEDS SALES MANAGER

Annie Kotokanniek@smdp.com

NIGHT EDITOR

Lori Luechtefeldlori@smdp.com

NIGHT EDITOR

Michael Tittingersomechum@smdp.com

CIRCULATION

Keith Wyatt

CIRCULATION

Glenn Bolan

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Dave Danforthdave@smdp.com

MASCOT

Maya Furukawamaya@smdp.com

LOCAL



Police arrest alleged massage parlor burglar

By Daily Press staff

POLICE HDQRTS. — Police arrested one of two suspects who may be responsible for a rash of armed robberies at local massage parlors.

Santa Monica Police arrested Matthew Luke Moulton, 21, of Reseda, on Thursday after he fled the scene of an armed robbery and hid from authorities in the Sunset Park neighborhood. Moulton and his alleged accomplice, who hasn't been caught, were seen by officers jumping a fence at 11th Street and Ocean Park Boulevard shortly before 10 p.m. on Thursday.

Police closed off the area and searched the neighborhood before capturing Moulton at about midnight, said SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega.

The first armed robbery occurred at about 9:30 p.m. at Sun Massage Parlor in the 1400 block of Lincoln Boulevard. Responding officers were checking other massage parlors in the area when they received a second call of another armed robbery in progress at Skin Paradise massage parlor in the 2400 block of Lincoln Boulevard. When officers got to the area,

they saw the suspects fleeing, Fabrega said.

Police found Moulton in the 1100 block of Maple Street. The victim positively identified Moulton as the alleged robber. He is being held on \$50,000 bail.

The second suspect is described as a white male, between 19 and 21 years old, five feet, six inches tall, 140 pounds, with brown hair and wearing a blue sweatshirt with a hood.

There have been seven armed robberies at area massage parlors in the past few months, with many others in the San Fernando Valley. Police said the suspects enter the parlors, confront the employees and demand money. During two of the robberies, the suspects used a knife to threaten the victim and in another incident, they simulated a weapon. No one has been injured during the robberies, police said.

SMPD detectives are working with the Los Angeles Police Department in the ongoing investigation. It's unknown whether Moulton and his alleged accomplice are responsible for the other Santa Monica robberies.

"It's too early to say if they are linked," he said.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Down but not out in Westwood

By Daily Press staff

Something got you down, but you aren't sure what?

Free depression and anxiety screenings are available now through June 30 at the California Graduate Institute Counseling Center in Westwood. The evaluation will include free testing and consultation. Participants of all ages are welcome.

The California Graduate Institute Counseling Center is a non-profit community agency dedicated to providing affordable psychological services to adults, adolescents, couples, families and children.

Call (310) 208-3120, ext. 102 to schedule an appointment.

City adopts a hazardous plan

By Daily Press staff

If there's a disaster declared here, the city has cash to handle it.

Santa Monica's multi-hazard mitigation plan was recently approved by the federal government's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The document was developed by the city in compliance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The document will be used to prioritize projects, policies and activities to reduce hazard risk and vulnerability in Santa Monica. It also will guide disaster mitigation activities during the next several years. The plan's

See BRIEFS, page 14



SURF REPORT

On Saturday, size is expected around chest high + at most south facing breaks, bigger at times at standouts. Note that a touch of wind swell is also expected, and onshore winds will likely pick up early.

For Sunday, the SW increases yet again with chest to head high + sets for south facing breaks.

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Today the water is:

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	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	3:40	-0.6	3:03	1.3	9:52	4.0	9:18	6.1
SUNDAY	4:19	-0.8	3:30	1.7	10:39	3.8	9:46	6.1
MONDAY	4:59	-0.8	3:57	2.1	11:28	3.5	10:15	5.9
TUESDAY	5:39	-0.6	4:22	2.4	12:21	3.3	10:45	5.6
WEDNESDAY	6:23	-0.4	4:46	2.7	1:25	3.1	11:18	5.3
THURSDAY	7:13	-0.1	5:07	2.9	2:56	3.0	11:56	4.9
FRIDAY	7:40	0.0	5:35	3.1	3:17	2.8	12:31	4.4

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A national survey conducted last week asked Americans what they would discuss with President George W. Bush if they had 15 minutes to talk to him. The top issue was Iraq, followed by Social Security and health care.

This week, Q-Line asks, "If you had 15 minutes with President Bush, what

would you ask him, say to him and discuss with him?"

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

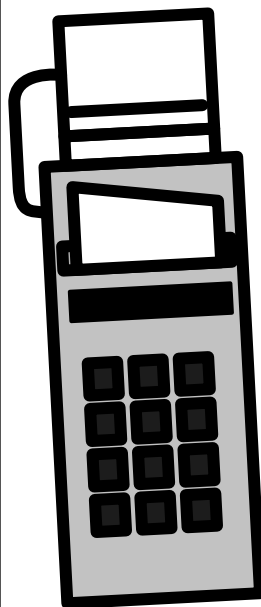


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City may be riding Shotgun into community plots

GROWING PAINS, from page 1

Recreation Commission, when two issues that threaten the future of the community gardens were discussed.

Not only have term limits been suggested for gardeners, but officials are considering permanently placing a historic house on the property, according to city staff.

Because the gardens are on city property and are used as recreational space, it's not fair that one group dominate the area, said City Attorney Marsha Moutrie. It's been determined that the way the gardens are managed doesn't necessarily mesh with City Hall's policy to provide all residents access to public space.

"Private use on public property is a legal concern," Moutrie said. "The legal concern I have is that the community gardens are a public resource, and with all public resources, it's important that the city devise a system that shares the space."

Some gardeners have tended their spaces for more than two decades while others have been waiting for a plot to open up for years.

The parks and recreation commission is considering revisions to the regulations that govern the gardens, including placing seven-year term limits on gardeners. Under the proposal, current gardeners would enter a lottery and would be able to renew their licenses for either the next seven, eight or nine years. All new gardeners would be limited to seven-year terms. As part of the phasing program, city staff suspects about one-third of all

the plots would turn over each year.

City employee Mary Humm, who manages and inspects the gardens, said other West Los Angeles community gardens don't have leasing term limits, but she also said none of the other area gardens have waiting lists as long as Santa Monica.

For the 80,000 citizens of Santa Monica, approximately half an acre of open land is reserved for community gardens. That space is divided into 70 plots: 60 are located at 2200 Main St. and 10 are located on Park Drive off of Broadway. The plots vary in size — some are 120 square feet, while others are 360 square feet. There are 69 gardeners who lease plots and 112 households are on the waiting list for garden space. The average wait for a plot is five to six years.

Gardeners maintained that the answer to decreasing the number of people on the waiting lists was to enforce stricter regulations and create more gardens in the city.

Hugh Browning, who keeps a community garden, is circulating a petition that asks City Hall to create gardens at the Fisher Lumber site, 1601 14th St. City Hall purchased the property earlier this year and it most likely will be turned into an extension of the adjacent Memorial Park. The City Council is scheduled to begin considering recreational uses for the site on May 10.

One gardener said he wouldn't have invested thousands of dollars into his garden if he had known it would be taken away. Others said gardening is an ongoing process that term limits would stifle.

"Having a garden has kept me sane," Francesco Raneri said. "Having term limits is ludicrous — like telling a dog owner she must euthanize her pet after seven years."

Randy Ziglar, a 23-year community gardener, said the gardens are different than other recreational spaces because the gardens provide a public benefit. As a result, they shouldn't have leases attached to them.

One way to weed out gardeners who have a hold on the space is to regulate the plots more rigorously. Right now, garden up-keep regulations are fairly relaxed, resulting in some plots not being maintained properly. Gardens are inspected on a monthly basis by city staff and gardeners can sustain nine citations a year for violating standards — such as weeds and overgrowth — before losing their plot.

Humm proposed that the maximum number of citations for unkempt gardens be lowered to three per year. Gardeners agreed that tightening regulations would increase the turnover rate, allowing more people to move off the waiting list faster.

But it's not just the loss of time that gardeners are worried about — it's space as well.

There's a proposal to move a historic home to the Main Street gardens site. The so-called Shotgun house, which dates back to the 1880s, is the only one of its kind left in Santa Monica. The three-room building is an example of early prefab housing. The house is temporarily being stored at the Santa Monica Airport, but a new location must be found due to the upcoming construction of a new park.

Mario Fonda-Bonardi, a member of the now-defunct Ocean Park Community Organization, which oversaw the preservation of the historic home, said the gardens would be a desirable place for it because it would be visible to the public. It could be used as a restroom facility and small work station for the gardeners, he suggested.

But not all commission members agreed that's the best use of the Shotgun house.

"If this building has historical value, then how dare we turn it into a storage place and a bathroom?" Commissioner Phil Brock asked.

Fonda-Bonardi countered that giving the house a purpose ensures its future life.

He also added that there was a way to install the Shotgun house on the garden perimeter without losing either plots or parking spaces — although he admitted that it would create a traffic flow problem, but it wasn't insurmountable.

Gardeners were adamantly opposed to any loss of garden space for the house and were skeptical that the house's placement there wouldn't reduce the amount of plots or parking.

The commission asked Humm to meet with gardeners and finalize revisions to the regulations. The commission appeared amenable to the idea that turnover would increase with stricter regulations, and term limits wouldn't be needed. However, even if the commission approves new regulations, the City Council has final say. Humm said she would write the new regulations by August.

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Parents, students speak up for Unity

SAMOHİ, from page 1

hundreds of spectators, some of whom refused to return to class, 12 students were suspended for fighting and defying administrators. There were no serious injuries reported in the incident.

Samohi officials and parents have since been grappling with the issue, trying to determine the best way to ensure a safe, comfortable learning environment.

"The kids are watching how we handle our differences," said Karen Dickerson, a Samohi Parent Teacher Student Association representative. "If we can't set aside our personal and political agendas, how can we expect our kids to do it?"

THE DISTRICT'S RESPONSE

In a 12-page report, the SMMUSD outlined the steps it has taken in the weeks following the fights to address issues related to violence at Samohi.

Samohi has 3,500 students, 250 staff and six full-time security guards charged with protecting the 33-acre campus. In addition, there is a police resource officer from the Santa Monica Police Department assigned to Samohi and other district schools.

The 12 students suspended for their involvement in the fights returned to school on Monday, April 25, all taking part in an ongoing mediation process.

A noticeable police presence on campus since the fights will continue to be phased out in coming weeks. The district has agreed to hire two additional full-time security officers, with more planned in the future. The security personnel will also receive additional training.

Students must identify themselves when they enter the campus, and entry/exit points are restricted. Samohi administrators are continuing to meet with the SMPD to solidify the school's emergency procedures should further lockdowns be deemed necessary.

Since the melee, Samohi administrators and staff have held regular meetings with 20 student leaders. The student leaders have come up with ideas which might help unite groups on campus and make students feel more comfortable, including a proposed peace rally to replace Samohi's traditional pep rally in May.

District officials are considering a request by students to reinstate a peer mediation program, dropped in recent years due to inadequate funding.

The Samohi Black Student Union, a group of Samohi black students, and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano(a) de Atzlan, a group of Samohi Latino students, have met twice since the fights to craft their responses. The black and Latino students directly involved in the fighting have been invited to take part in discussions with the two student groups.

Samohi has a student body in which 47 percent is considered minority, and an administration and staff which is largely white. In its report, the district said it will make efforts to hire more ethnically and culturally diverse educators. Samohi principal Ilene Straus said student groups also will facilitate in the hiring process, providing the school principal, who makes the final hiring decisions, with their suggestions as to which candidates might make the best fit.

In terms of curriculum, Samohi admin-

Highlights of the Unity Coalition's plan:

- The SMMUSD must engage in much greater efforts to address institutionalized racism in the district.
- Increase outreach and recruitment of faculty of color who can relate to students' backgrounds and life experiences.
- Develop a restorative justice approach to student discipline so there is less focus on punishment and more on transformation.
- Increase student engagement by celebrating the culture, history and accomplishments of African American and Latino students.
- Ensure the curriculum itself and the manner in which it is taught is culturally respectful and relevant.
- Develop a new protocol on addressing inter-cultural conflict that includes parental and community involvement.
- Ensure the efforts are coordinated with middle-school reform efforts.
- Develop a "master plan" for African American and Latino student achievement.
- Bid for outside experts to conduct residency patterns of youth who experience academic failure and assess the status of the neighborhoods in which they live.
- Develop a model with community input to train school staff and parents on how to create an empowering learning environment for students.

istrators are adding a cultural studies and human relations component to their freshman seminar, a required course. In addition, Samohi's sophomore world history class will offer a component with a broader ethnic perspective. Curriculum development for those courses is planned for May and July, and will become available for students in the fall of 2005.

A UNITED FRONT

Several parents and students spoke at the school board meeting on behalf of the 10-point Unity Plan.

Many of them — dressed in black, wearing green labels with the words "Unity Coalition" — said that while the district's report on the Samohi fights was a good beginning to heal wounds they said have been in place for years, the report did not go far enough to address problems of racial inequality that continue to persist on the Samohi campus.

"Violence will not be tolerated with our children," said Ana Maria Jara, a member of the Unity Coalition. "We will not stand by the sidelines and watch. This isn't about African Americans and Latinos fighting. This is about our children's only chance to get an education and a job that will allow them to live."

"It's a matter of life and death."

One speaker at the meeting said he was dismayed by the district's light stance on the fights and the approaches taken by some groups, such as the Unity Coalition, to address violence on the Samohi campus.

See SAMOHİ, page 8

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HEY TO THE CHIEF: 15 MINUTES ARE UP

This past week, Q-line asked:
"If you had 15 minutes with President Bush, what you would ask and discuss with him?"

Here are your responses:

① "I would ask him three questions: 'What's wrong with you?' 'What the hell do you think you are doing?' and 'Do you suffer from a small man's complex?'"

② "What a stupid question you are asking. I wouldn't waste one minute of my time talking to what we call the so-called president. To me, he's not a president at all — he sends these boys to Iraq, where we're killing thousands of them and wouldn't bring them back. Me waste my time talking to him? I'd rather talk to a dog than talk to that so-called president."

③ "In any discussion with GWB, our homeland security should be top priority, especially military presence all along the border between Mexico and the United States to prevent illegal immigration. Everything else is secondary and hinges one way or another on this. Second to this, I would add, get our military people out of Iraq."

④ "Why Mr. President, when you have to depend on information from your advisors, do you not take their advice and often discredit or terminate them when their suggestions in fact do not flow with your slow-flow of thinking? Namely, four-star general Colin Powell and the various inspectors who were searching for Iraq's massive arms supplies and found none. And what is your love-affair with super-terrorist bin Laden? Do you derive erotic gratification when bin salutes you and all the rest of us with his middle finger? Or is it that bin is an Arab, and America depends on Arab oil to keep your friends in their fancy-pants, alliga-

tor shoes and Bentleys, very much like Nazi war crimes ... escaped the news due to his family owning of the German Motor Works. What Mr. President, you do not understand my question? And you say that I am fired?"

⑤ "My advice to President Bush is the same answer I gave to last week's question and I hope you spell every word correctly: For some time now, the United States has been closing military bases throughout this wonderful country of ours. My recommendations are for you, President Bush, to open new armed forces bases along the southern borders of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The personnel stationed at each location, including the National Guard while on annual training exercises, as well as career soldiers should be utilized in the safe-guarding and protecting the borders from the Pacific Ocean on the West to the Gulf of Mexico on the East. This would not only stop the mass infusion of illegal immigrants migrating from the south, but would also be a boon to the economy, for each state in the surrounding areas along our borders."

⑥ "Hey Bush, how can I get a place in the underground city bunkers along with you, Cheney and others of the ruling elite and their lackeys for when you let loose the biowar topside to reduce the population to 500 million from 6 billion?"

⑦ "Jobs, stop out-sourcing jobs. These corporations that outsource jobs, they should be taxed. Tax the hell out of them until they beg for mercy and then tax them again. Social Security is not

broken just erase the salary caps so the rich people have to start paying more. Energy: Try making solar energy ... feasible — stuff like that, things we can renew. Iraq law: He's got that so screwed up, it's beyond redemption. And countries like Saudi Arabia and Israel, we should not be supporting them one bit because they are dictatorships. The Israelis occupy Arab lands; the Saudis, they oppress half their population — as in the women. As far as the environment is concerned, Bush is going to trash that, we've got to stop him from doing that. We've got to tax the rich people, all the ones that get all of the tax breaks instead of the middle-class and the poor people, so tax his rich friends. As far as the border is concerned, put the troops on there. We don't need all these illegal aliens coming in and taking what little jobs we have and destroying the rest of our country, turning it into a sewer just like Mexico is already. And they're destroying our healthcare system. Hospitals are clogged with illegal aliens and they don't pay so everyone else has to pay. That's why we need to have nationalized health care. Get rid of these HMOs they don't do anything. Get rid of the pharmaceutical big shots, they don't do anything, just have them make the drugs and find the cures for the diseases. And the doctors should be treating the patients, the only people who should be making medical decisions are the doctors, not the Christian-Taliban, not the pencil pushers — they don't know a thing about medicine, they shouldn't be making medical decisions. As far as the special interests are concerned, the only special interest Bush ought to be concerned about is the American public, not the fat-cat corporate pals that he has like in the oil industry. There's a lot more I could tell Bush, but there's not enough pages in the paper for that. Since Bush is in his second term he can't run for re-election so he should quit worrying about what his corporate donors want to do and do what the American public wants to do. That would be the only way to assure himself a decent place in history, as opposed to the way he's going now."

⑧ "First I would ask President Bush why he ignores the pleas of the majority of U.S. citizens to control our southern border against illegal immigration. Second, I would ask him why he caters to President Fox of Mexico regarding U.S. policy on immigration, specifically using our country as a safety valve for Mexico's exploding population."

⑨ "If I ever got that close I'd probably be nauseated. Anyway, since our corporate emperor lacks either a heart or a mind, it would be pointless to say anything. A sycophantic, 'yes, sir,' is all he's programmed to understand."

⑩ "Oil in the Middle East drives President Bush and Vice President Cheney. Back in the 1920s President Bush's great grandfather George Herbert Walker, was doing oil deals with the Arab states in the Middle East. His daughter married Prescott Bush, father of G. H. W. Bush and grandfather to our current president. Oil deals in the Middle East with the Arab states are part of the Walker and Bush legacy. Cheney also comes from an oil background, but to the point: With 15 minute with President Bush, I would sum it up with one sentence, 'Look back to America, and our needs Mr. President, the American people and our needs have been forsaken.'"

⑪ "If I had 15 minutes with President Bush I would want to say: Thank you very much for all that you've done for the country, and despite all of the criticism I do believe that you have the best interests of the country at heart. I would recommend that you stay firm in Iraq even though it looks like it's having a lot of problems, but I think in the long-run it may work out. Number two, on Social Security I would recommend that you go toward making sure that the system is solvent and if you want to try the experimental accounts, do that on a very limited basis and see what the problems and what the strengths are. Again, thanks very much."

Circle of friends for those who feel 'liberal isn't a dirty word'



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

There is no shortage of support groups in our society. There are groups for people with various addictions. There are anger management groups. Some groups are very specific like the support group for "Gay and Lesbian Former Jehovah's Witnesses" or the one for people who had controlling parents. Some are more general like the men's and women's support groups. I guess I'll have to wait for a "Why Are Gasoline Prices So High?" group as well as an "I Hate Artificial Turf and Indoor Stadiums" support group. But there is one segment of society that won't have to wait any longer. A support group for certain people who have worked hard, been frustrated and discouraged, and are often belittled, began this past February. It's a support group for dispirited liberals. Not surprisingly, this support group is located right here in Santa Monica. The

Activists' Support Circle is the brainchild of Santa Monica's Jerry Rubin (same name as the famous member of the Chicago 7, similar politics, but a different guy). Its purpose is to give liberals "emotional rejuvenation."

Nobody gets up at these meetings and says haltingly, "My name is John Smith and I'm a liberal." It's not a 12-step program. In fact, it's really the opposite of programs that help people control their addictions. This support group tries to give its members encouragement so they'll remain addicted to political activism despite all of their recent discouragements.

The last several years have been difficult for committed liberals. They're still reeling from what they see as the disputed 2000 election; their hard work didn't pay off in the 2004 election; a war that many of them disagree with still seems to be raging, and national politicians are calling for the end of the separation of church and state. No wonder they need a place where they can vent, listen to other similar-minded people and, yes, get some hugs. Being for unpopular and seemingly hopeless causes can be tiring and discour-

aging. But unpopular causes are probably the only ones worth fighting for. The popular ones don't need your hard work and blind optimism.

So, if a person's been crying cries out against civil liberty abuse under the guise of the "Patriot Act" only to feel that his words have fallen on deaf ears, he can talk about his frustration at the group meeting. If a woman has been teased because she's still for the Equal Rights Amendment, these folks will feel her pain. Those who spend their days urging health care for poor people, the closing of tax loopholes for the rich, or trying to get our country to join other nations in a search for peace, can talk about how discouraged they often get. If you drive by the place maybe you'll hear people wailing, "Why couldn't Clinton just keep his pants on?"

But don't expect conservative Republicans to have meetings like this. Matthew Knee, a conservative activist and chairman of Bruin Republicans says, "A support group seems very touchy-feely and un-Republican ..." So, I doubt that in a few years you'll be able to overhear discouraged Republicans shouting, "Why did we mess with Social Security?" Conservatives

generally have very little sympathy for those who wallow in their problems.

Knee adds that Republicans didn't fall into emotionally-needy doldrums during the Clinton years because they controlled Congress. And then those impeachment hearings bolstered conservative spirits. Conservatives often see liberals as "cry babies." When they don't get their way or their candidate in office, they continue to complain instead of just accepting reality. So, it probably won't surprise them that some liberals who just won't let go of their causes need a support group. But before conservatives get too condescending about this, I think I should remind you of something. Conservatives also have a support group they run to when things aren't going their way. It's called the Supreme Court.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He also has read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's opinion page and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarver-moderntimes.com.)



GUEST COMMENTARY BY KEITH LOCKITCH

The bait and switch of 'intelligent design'

Legal and political battle lines have been drawn across the country over the teaching of "intelligent design," the view that life is so complex it must be the product of a "higher intelligence." The central issue under debate is whether "intelligent design" is, in fact, a genuine scientific theory or merely a disguised form of religious advocacy — creationism in camouflage.

Proponents of "intelligent design" aggressively market their viewpoint as real science, insisting it is not religiously based. Writes one leading advocate, Michael Behe: "The conclusion of intelligent design flows naturally from the data itself — not from sacred books or sectarian beliefs."

Proponents of "intelligent design" claim that Darwinian evolution is a fundamentally flawed theory — that there are certain complex features of living organisms evolution simply cannot explain, but which can be explained as the handiwork of an "intelligent designer."

Their viewpoint is not religiously based, they insist, because it does not require that the "intelligent designer" be God. "Design," writes another leading proponent, William Dembski, "requires neither magic nor miracles nor a creator."

Indeed, "design" apparently requires surprisingly little of the "designer's" identity: "Inferences to design," contends Behe, "do not require that we have a candidate for the role of designer." According to its advocates, the "designer" responsible for "intelligent design" in biology could be any sort of "creative intelligence" capable of engineering the basic elements of life. Some have even seriously nominated advanced space aliens for the role.

Their premise seems to be that as long as they don't explicitly name the "designer" — as long as they allow that the "designer" could be a naturally existing being, a being accessible to scientific study — that this somehow saves their viewpoint from the charge of being inherently religious in character.

But does it?

Imagine we discovered an alien on Mars with a penchant for bio-engineering. Could such a natural being fulfill the requirements of an "intelligent designer?"

It could not. Such a being would not actually account for the complexity that "design" proponents seek to explain. Any natural being capable of "designing" the complex features of earthly life would, on their premises, require its own "designer." If "design" can be inferred merely from observed complexity, then our purported Martian "designer" would be just another complex being in nature that supposedly cannot be

explained without positing another "designer." One does not explain complexity by dreaming up a new complexity as its cause.

By the very nature of its approach, "intelligent design" cannot be satisfied with a "designer" who is part of the natural world. Such a "designer" would not answer the basic question its advocates raise: it would not explain biological complexity as such. The only "designer" that would stop their quest for a "design" explanation of complexity is a "designer" about whom one cannot ask any questions or who cannot be subjected to any kind of scientific study — a "designer" that "transcends" nature and its laws — a "designer" not susceptible of rational explanation — in short: a supernatural "designer."

Its advertising to the contrary notwithstanding, "intelligent design" is inherently a quest for the supernatural. Only one "candidate for the role of designer" need apply. Dembski himself — even while trying to deny this implication — concedes that "if there is design in biology and cosmology, then that design could not be the work of an evolved intelligence." It must, he admits, be that of a "transcendent intelligence" to whom he euphemistically refers as "the big G."

The supposedly nonreligious theory of "intelligent design" is nothing more than a crusade to peddle religion by giving it the veneer of science — to pretend, as one commentator put it, that "faith in God is something that holds up under the microscope."

The insistence of "intelligent design" advocates that they are "agnostic regarding the source of design" is a bait-and-switch. They dangle out the groundless possibility of a "designer" who is susceptible of scientific study — in order to hide their real agenda of promoting faith in the supernatural. Their scientifically accessible "designer" is nothing more than a gateway god — metaphysical marijuana intended to draw students away from natural, scientific explanations and get them hooked on the supernatural.

No matter how fervently its salesmen wish "intelligent design" to be viewed as cutting-edge science, there is no disguising its true character. It is nothing more than a religiously motivated attack on science, and should be rejected as such.

(Keith Lockitch is a junior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine. The institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand, best-selling author of "Atlas Shrugged" and "The Fountainhead," and originator of the philosophy of objectivism.)

Forever yours, mom



INSIDE OUT
BY AMY PERRITT

My baby was 3 weeks old, and there I was sitting on our living room floor balancing a pump on my right breast and my daughter suckling the left.

It was 5 p.m. My unfinished bowl of cereal (now sludge) still sat on the coffee table, along with an apple core and some crackers. I was still dressed in the clothes I'd worn to bed, I hadn't showered in two days, I was working on two hours of sleep and I couldn't recall the last time I'd brushed my teeth.

Something my mom told me the day I gave birth to my daughter came to mind. Words her mother had shared with her after she'd given birth to her first baby.

"You will now be a mother until the day you die."

I stared at the TV in disbelief. CNN was playing news coverage that I had now seen at least six times that day and could recite like an expert anchor. Was this it? Was this what she meant? Weren't there something like 4 million babies born in the United States last year? What was everyone thinking?

I had spent the last nine months fielding advice from parents reminding me to eat vegetables, friends warning me to sleep now, neighbors reprimanding me for carrying grocery bags and strangers philosophizing on whether or not babies should cry themselves to sleep.

I had spent the first three nauseous months strategically hiding crackers everywhere. My craving for Greek salad went unsatisfied since Feta cheese was "not allowed" and then I had had to spend 20 minutes assuring my brother one day that he could eat Brie even though pregnant women shouldn't.

No un-pasteurized cheeses, no herbal tea, no raw eggs, no sushi, no caffeine, no alcohol. No wonder I was crying at Nike commercials and became hysterical when my husband brought home Baskin-Robbins chocolate chip ice cream rather than mint chocolate chip.

And when a woman says she doesn't mind abstaining from alcohol because it's a nice cleansing experience, she's lying. It's not fun and yes it does bother us when you drink in our presence. Take it from someone who was pregnant for the summer, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. You see, by month four when presumably we no longer feel like throwing up, we'd give our right arm for a cold beer.

I hadn't "really" sweat since I'd stopped running at four months, and twice nearly fainted during level I yoga.

Month nine, I couldn't eat without acid creeping up my throat and couldn't sleep without rolling onto my back. Tell me, who can sleep on their left side all night anyway? Even worse, according to my husband, I'd picked up snoring.

Since my daughter had been born, I'd listened to everyone say how much she looked like "Daddy." How joyous! Yet, I was the one with the stapled incision below my midriff.

I'd learned how to administer a rectal thermometer (after vowing never to use one) and could confirm that engorgement does feel like your breasts are filled with rocks. Laundry had become a daily task and I had the pediatrician on speed dial, calling him for ridiculous reasons that for lack of sleep seemed life-threatening.

That night, my baby's 3-week-old anniversary, my husband took her for a drive. Freedom! At first, I was ecstatic and immediately showered. But while I tidied the apartment and heated up soup, all I could think about was her.

Was she crying? Had my husband tucked the soft blanket around her neck? Was she hungry? Was my husband playing Beethoven to soothe her? Were her feet covered? Was she lonely in the back seat? Did she miss me?

I missed her ... desperately.

Recently, we went to the doctor for her two-month shots. She squeezed my fingers and cried as the nurse administered each one. Then she looked at me in somber wonder.

"I'm sorry," I wanted her to know. "This is going to help keep you healthy," I justified. "I love you," I told her. "Mommy's here," I said.

That night after quietly changing her diaper, I gently stroked her forehead to make sure the resulting fever had disappeared. Her legs and arms were showing signs of squeezable pudginess. Her belly looked wonderfully satiated. Her blonde locks shimmered against the dim lighting. Her marvelous cheeks were rounding out into landing pads for kisses. Her ears ... a perfect miracle. Her nose ... cute-as-a-button. Her lips ... loveable as ever.

What a beautiful being.

Her big blue eyes and innocent smile looked up at me. I started to cry. It was 2 a.m. and she clearly wasn't going back to sleep anytime soon, but that was all right with me.

I could've stared at her all night. I'm her mother.

(Amy Perritt is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica and now also a full-time mom.)

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LOCAL

School board reiterates need for communication

SCHOOL VISIT, from page 1

Monica Police Department at the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified District's April 21 school board meeting for a visit earlier that week in which he brought along two Latino men — at least one of whom police believed was a gang member as recently as a year ago. The two men, tattooed and wearing baggy clothes, arrived with de la Torre during the lunch period in an effort the school board member has since said was intended to detract youth from participating in violence and the gang lifestyle.

Meanwhile, police and administrators at Samohi were unaware of the visit and concerned it might escalate to a riot since the unexpected arrival clearly seemed to upset some black students at a school still recovering from a series of fights that broke out April 15 between blacks and Latinos.

The SMMUSD school board addressed the issue formally at Thursday's meeting, reiterating the need for board members to clear visits with administration.

De la Torre acknowledged there may have been some miscommunication regarding the incident, but he looked forward to continue inspiring students having trouble by providing presentations from those who have overcome similar obstacles in their own lives.

"The people I brought on campus have valuable lessons for people who have a hard time growing up," de la Torre said. "They are peacemakers. Labeling them as 'gang members' does not address who they now are. At the same time, I need to take responsibility for the miscommunication that occurred and plan to use the appropriate protocol in future visits I plan at Santa Monica High School."

On April 21, Santa Monica Deputy Police Chief Phil Sanchez presented a letter to the school board on behalf of Police Chief James Butts, Jr. The letter inquired as to the nature and appropriateness of de la Torre's visit.

The letter details how de la Torre and the two other men entered Samohi during lunch. Police on the scene said one of the men was "Big Lucky" from Santa Monica's 17th

Street Gang. According to Sanchez, the police department had specific information they received last year about "Big Lucky" being a "shot caller" for the gang, ordering young gang members to go into other cities and commit assaults. The police were not able to identify de la Torre's other guest, but he is said to have been wearing a blue "Joker" tank top and blue jeans with several tattoos on his body which identified his gang affiliation.

De la Torre said one of the guests was Steven Luciano, owner of a successful clothing apparel store celebrating hip-hop culture, a man who represents a positive alternative to the gang lifestyle Samohi youth can identify with.

Luciano was signed up to speak at Thursday's school board meeting to share his thoughts on the incident, but he was not available when his name was called. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. and did not end until 1:15 a.m.

Ron Wilkins — a professor of Africana studies at

California State University in Carson, Calif., who has known de la Torre for nearly 10 years — said he has been outraged by the way in which he felt the police department attempted to demonize de la Torre, his guests and their efforts in the letter.

"Not only is Mr. de la Torre fully committed to establishing and sustaining collaborative efforts between black and brown youth, but he continues to be one of the most genuine, sincere and hard-working role models and leaders the Santa Monica community ever had," Wilkins said.

Representatives from the Santa Monica Police Department said they needed to confirm facts of the meeting before commenting.

School board members said they were glad to discuss the issue formally and hear de la Torre's comments regarding his needing to communicate better with school administrators in the future.

Schools super welcomes fresh ideas from Unity

SAMOH, from page 5

"It's like trying to solve a bank robbery by insisting all of the tellers be diverse," said Pat Cramer, a Santa Monica resident. "I have still not seen the district prove that violence will not be tolerated."

School board member Oscar de la Torre, a Unity Coalition member and organizer who helped create the plan, said he was impressed with the district's plan for Samohi and wanted to make sure a continuum was established to ensure the momentum is carried forward.

"When I hear 'lockdown' and 'race riots', I think of prisons, not schools," de la Torre said. "The violence we are seeing is part of a larger problem, and non-violence is the solution."

De la Torre said there is a countywide problem with violence and Santa Monica has an opportunity to lead in efforts to address it.

To do so, de la Torre said there needs to be a continual mechanism in place within the district to begin addressing violence in the schools. He said concepts endorsed by the Unity Coalition can help make that happen.

SMMUSD superintendent John Deasy said there may be some overlap with the Unity Plan and programming already in development in the SMMUSD to help increase achievement for marginalized students at Samohi, but he was interested in seeing what ideas might be used in the district plan.

"I have agreed to meet with members of the Unity Coalition, and I look forward to it," Deasy said.

Santa Monica resident John Petz, who has promoted the development of a culturally-diverse curriculum at Samohi in the past, said it's crucial that community members continue to work toward common ground.

"We can not allow racism to come between us," Petz said. "Racism is ignorance, no matter what color you are."



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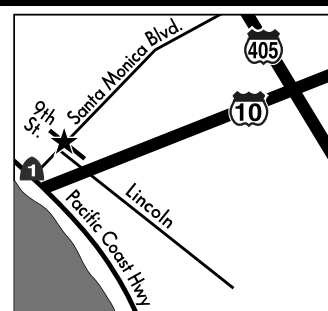
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STATE



STATE BRIEFS

Voters look to be ready for some football

By The Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — A poll shows a majority of the city’s registered voters favor bringing a National Football League team to the Rose Bowl.

The poll released Thursday by the Rose Bowl Operating Co. found 58 percent of respondents “strongly favor” or “somewhat favor” making the 83-year-old stadium home field for an NFL franchise. Thirty-three percent “somewhat oppose” or “strongly oppose.”

On Monday, the City Council will begin reviewing an environmental study on the impacts of rebuilding the Rose Bowl to meet NFL standards. The council must certify the report to continue negotiations with the league.

According to the survey, 78 percent of respondents think the City Council should seriously consider making the NFL a long-term tenant at the Rose Bowl when the stadium’s financial woes are taken into account. Nineteen percent oppose the idea.

A total of 808 people responded to the poll, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent, and was conducted by the Santa Monica research firm Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Association.

Marina operators see their ship come in

By The Associated Press

VENTURA, Calif. — Jurors decided the former operators of the county-owned Channel Islands Marina should get \$3.5 million compensation from Ventura County for breach of contract.

The Farrell family, which built the marina in 1963 at the Oxnard harbor, sued Ventura County in July 2003 after lease negotiations with the county Harbor Department broke down.

Superior Court Judge Frederick Bysshe ruled in September that the Harbor Department had no right to stop the Farrells from removing boat slips at the marina after their leases ended. He ordered the county to pay compensation but left the amount up to a jury.

After a four-week trial, the jury Thursday voted 10-2 to give the Farrells the \$3.5 million sought by the family. The county argued unsuccessfully that the improvements were worth only \$50,000.

“Our family name was pretty much dragged through the mud by the county, and this makes up for a lot,” Charles Farrell said after the jury verdict.

Harbor Director Lyn Krieger said her department will ask the Board of Supervisors to appeal the judgment.

“We have disagreed with the judge’s decision from the beginning,” Krieger said. “It seems what’s forgotten in the mix here is that the county is also a landlord and should have the right for a lease to end.”

But Supervisor John Flynn blamed harbor officials’ bungling of the lease negotiations for the jury’s decision.

“I think the harbor is in desperate need of enhanced management. It has one problem after another,” Flynn said. “I think this is pretty solid evidence that we need a new harbor director.”

Water board lets the chloride flow

By The Associated Press

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. — The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board approved higher limits on chloride levels released by two upstream Santa Clara River reclamation plants despite concerns from farming and environmental groups.

Opponents said higher chloride levels could cause damage to salt-sensitive strawberry and avocado crops in the Santa Clara River Valley.

"There is a clear link between high chloride levels and damage to crops. We would like to ask you to reduce, not increase, the levels," Ventura County Farm Bureau executive director Rex Laird told the board meeting Thursday in Simi Valley. But the board said adopting the higher levels was a “housekeeping matter,” not a policy change. The limits were part of a change to operating permits for the Los Angeles County Sanitation District treatment plants in Saugus and Valencia.

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Crowds stomach corpse displays

BY JUSTIN M. NORTON

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Nine-year-old Alyssa Kim traces her finger near the inside of a spliced cadaver, adeptly identifying each part of the digestive system.

"The stomach is on the other side — and that's the liver," says the plucky youngster, seemingly unfazed to be surrounded by preserved bodies and organs in an exhibition hall.

The home-schooled girl and her family are among thousands visiting "The Universe Within," one of at least three "corpse exhibits" touring the country. The collection of bodies and organs in San Francisco once was used to instruct medical students in Beijing.

The exhibits have been wildly successful. The "Body Worlds" shows currently on view in Chicago and Cleveland claim more than 16 million visitors in 27 cities in Asia, Europe and Los Angeles. "The Universe Within," whose recent opening prompted copycat complaints from "Body Worlds" organizers, is proving popular as well.

The proliferation of such shows raises questions: Are they art, exploitation or science? Do they speak to our innate fascination with the human body, a voyeuristic desire for a cheap thrill or our fear of death?

"Americans have been remarkably shielded from the most visceral imagery generated by 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq, which has been printed and broadcast elsewhere," said David Skal, a horror scholar and author of "Screams of Reason: Mad Science in Modern Culture."

"People are being torn apart daily, but the only places to bear witness seem to be

exhibits like 'Body Worlds' and splatter movies."

The shows got their start when "Body Worlds," invented by Gunther von Hagens, was displayed in Japan in 1996. The enigmatic German anatomist has faced numerous ethical complaints in his home country and elsewhere.

Von Hagens was recently fined in Germany for misusing the title "professor" by not making it clear that his degree was awarded in China. He said he was innocent. He was also dubbed "Dr. Frankenstein" for performing Britain's first public autopsy in more than 170 years.

Von Hagens also is facing criticism in Poland, where he bought an abandoned factory he said he wants to use to build machines for preserving bodies. Residents are upset that corpses may one day be processed in western Poland — something now handled in China.

The criticism hasn't stopped his shows from growing and branching out — the "Body Worlds 2" exhibit features different displays, including cadavers and organs that show the consequences of poor health habits.

The corpses in all the exhibits were preserved through "plastination," which replaces body fluids with liquid plastic. The plastic is hardened, leaving tissues intact. Bodies can then be displayed without formaldehyde or glass containers, so onlookers can come within inches of exposed organs.

In the San Francisco show, many corpses are stripped of skin so the muscles

See **BODY AND SOUL**, page 11



STATE



Ethicists questioning dead body tours '05

BODY AND SOUL, from page 10

pop out. Several bodies are propped up like department store mannequins, and individual organs are displayed with veins and capillaries intact. Red veins spread like moss over one skeleton, while a green liver and blue kidneys are presented with their connective systems — a three-dimensional presentation that could never be offered in a medical textbook.

Some of the cadavers are macabre — one nonchalantly holds his preserved skin on a clothes hanger, while a nearby corpse rides a bicycle.

"I certainly think these exhibits are art," said Kevin Moore, an instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco and an expert on surrealism. "If the bodies were just used anatomically, there would be no reason to pose or light them the way they do. It's intended to be viewed as art."

Moore concedes that the sculptures probably couldn't be purchased like paintings, but given the high fees charged at each of the exhibits, "it's still for sale in a sense." Body Worlds charges \$21 for general admission to the Chicago and Cleveland shows.

Some visitors aren't searching for an artistic experience but practical knowledge — medical students and massage therapists at the San Francisco exhibit said they were seeking a deeper look at the human body. The shows also can be fascinating to people who fondly remember assembling "Visible Man" model kits as children, or dissecting cats and frogs in biology class.

Such traditions date back centuries.

Skal, who will teach a horror course at the University of Victoria in British Columbia this year based on his book "The Monster Show," points to the 18th-century European tradition of wax anatomical models, "startlingly realistic" exhibits that reproduced dissected corpses. Wax museums later specialized in reproducing tableaux of murders and executions.

In the United States, exhibits featuring corpses or deformed bodies have long been sold as educational. In the late 1800s, as Charles Darwin's theory of evolution was challenging beliefs, traveling freak shows claimed corpses and fetuses in their exhibits were evidence of the "missing link" between humans and animals.

"In America, the body and its functions have always been considered nasty, something to be suppressed or pushed out of consciousness," Skal said.

Some still recoil from the exhibitions. Perhaps that's because they're looking at the shows like horror movies, rather than scientific education, says Lisa Kim, who brought Alyssa and her two other home-schooled daughters to the San Francisco show.

"The portion of people who would be scared is very small compared to people who find it fascinating," said Kim, 48, clutching an anatomy coloring book.

Some ethical experts disagree, saying the shows commercialize death and are unnecessary for scientific education.

"This uses actual human material. Even if someone were to consent to this, it contributes to an objectification of the human body because the bodies are used commercially," said Carol Taylor, a medical ethicist at Georgetown University. "If you allow this, then what happens afterward? You are turning (bodies) into an artistic creation and using people for something other than themselves."

In Cleveland and Los Angeles, ethical advisory panels were assembled beforehand to approve the shows. The San Francisco show, which has no immediate plans for a run in another city, met no resistance to the exhibits or an

accompanying ad campaign.

Organizers say they followed strict guidelines regarding the donation and use of bodies, but ethicists question that claim. Von Hagens has said that his Institute for Plastination uses corpses from donors who wanted their bodies displayed, and German prosecutors found no evidence to substantiate allegations that he may have used the corpses of executed Chinese prisoners.

The "Body Worlds" shows now promote a donation program — people interested in signing "a declaration of intent" to donate remains must review information detail-

ing what happens to the body in their labs, and how the "plastinates" are used.

Alyssa Kim would gladly tour another corpse exhibit. "It's amazing to see things you always wanted to know about the body," the 9-year-old said. "I'd come here again, and I'd take Daddy."

The "Universe Within" is at San Francisco's Masonic Auditorium through Sept. 4, while the "Body Worlds" exhibits are on view at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry through Sept. 5 and Cleveland's Great Lakes Science Center through Sept. 18.

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BY FABIAN E. PADILLA
 PRESIDENT SAFE GAS SERVICES

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LOCAL □ STATE



Life is hard herding it through grapevine

BY JULIANA BARBASSA

Associated Press Writer

KETTLEMAN CITY — The shepherd strolled in knee-high grass, watching over a flock in a distant pasture near this remote outpost in California's vast San Joaquin Valley.

At nightfall, he returned to a 6-by-12 plywood trailer with no running water and no toilet.

"It's a hard life," he said in Spanish. "What can I do about it? At home, I had no future."

Born to shepherds in the Peruvian Andes, Miguel did not want his full name used, fearing that speaking out would lead to his work visa being revoked.

Miguel's living conditions — barely a roof over his head and no sanitation — mirror those of a majority of California's sheepherders, according to a survey by Fresno-based Central California Legal Services.

The numbers are high despite a state law passed to ensure adequate living conditions.

In interviews conducted with 22 herders scattered throughout five counties, the group found that 91 percent had no toilet, 67 percent had no shower and 64 percent had no heat. Nearly 70 percent had no access to a cell phone or radio for emergency medical communication.

"I remember being sick to my stomach and waiting for days before I could tell the foreman. Then I waited longer for him to bring me medicine," Tito Macha, a Peruvian shepherd, said in Spanish from the legal service's office.

Most of California's shepherds are legal migrant workers from Peru, Chile and Mongolia. The few dozen immigrants roam the state's grasslands, deserts and foothills during grazing season.

In 2001, lawmakers boosted monthly

wages and required that living quarters include toilets, heating, drinking water, regular mail service, transportation to the nearest town and access to a telephone or radio for emergencies.

Ranchers such as Dominique Minaberrigarai said California's mandated wage increase, from \$900 to \$1,200 a month, has hurt an industry that already was facing competition from synthetic fibers and the entry of China and other countries into the wool market.

California is home to the country's second-largest sheep industry. Wool sheared in the state generated \$2.8 million in 2003.

In other states with sizable sheep production, including Wyoming, Colorado and Arizona, shepherds are paid much less — about \$650 a month. Because it's hard to calculate how long herders work, they're exempt from the federal minimum wage laws.

A treasurer of the California Wool Grower's Association, Minaberrigarai said he knows some ranchers don't follow the rules. But he said he does, providing indoor, portable camping toilets to the six shepherds his family employs.

He said it's nearly impossible to provide some of the other amenities, such as running water. Shepherds follow their herds into some of the state's most remote pockets.

The state's Employment Development Department is responsible for inspecting the shepherds' living conditions for the federal labor department, which approves the ranchers' requests for workers.

Department spokesman Kevin Callori said employers have been notified when violations were identified. But he said the department has not taken formal enforcement actions in the past couple of years.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

approval by FEMA ensures the city's continued eligibility for federal disaster assistance funds following a declared disaster, as well as a pre-disaster funding to reduce disaster impacts in the community.

The primary goals of the plan are: To protect lives and property, improve emergency services capability, increase public awareness of local hazards, develop partnerships in implementation and promote sustainable living.

For information on the plan, contact the Santa Monica Office of Emergency Management at (310) 458-8686.

It's not all in your head

By Daily Press staff

There are a lot of misconceptions about mental illness, experts say.

But May is Mental Health Month, and Step Up on Second, a mental healthcare agency, is providing a series of free lectures dealing with different aspects of the illnesses featuring experts in the field.

The series will kick-off Tuesday, May 10, and continue on Tuesday evenings throughout the month:

May 10 — "Understanding the Ups and Downs of Bipolar Disorder" with Dr. Michael DiPaolo.

May 17 — "Medications 2005: A Discussion About Medications and Treatment of Mental Illness" with Dr. Dino Tripodis.

May 24 — "How Families Can Help in the Recovery Process" with Dr. Michael DiPaolo.

May 31 — "What is Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Why is it the State of the Art Treatment for Mental Illness" with Dr. Alex Kopelowicz.

All lectures begin at 7 p.m. and will be held at The First Presbyterian Church, 1220 2nd St. in Santa Monica. Parking is available for \$3 across from the church in parking structure No. 2.

All lectures are free and open to the public, but space is limited. Call (310) 394-6889, ext. 22 to reserve a seat.

NATIONAL



Many nestle up with NEPA

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS

Associated Press Writer

SPOKANE, Wash. — If the first public hearing on changing the nation's landmark environmental protection act is any indication, the law may be liked to death.

No one at the hearing on reforming the National Environmental Policy Act attacked the law, although Republicans noted repeatedly that it needed to be reformed.

"We want to improve the environment," insisted U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, at the beginning of the April 23 meeting in Spokane, Wash. "But people are so wedded to bureaucratic inefficiency, they don't want to see change."

Democrats were much more strident in defending NEPA, saying the law is the epitome of democracy because it ensures people will have input in major government decisions.

"NEPA is about people's access to the democratic process," said U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., the only Democratic lawmaker at the hearing. "They can protect their water and land and air. It makes sure that agencies listen to people."

The debate over NEPA is one of those obtuse insider battles that the general public often ignores, but which are profoundly important.

President Nixon signed NEPA in 1970, and it serves as the basis for federal management of public lands. The law requires federal agencies to conduct lengthy environmental reviews before approving projects. It is key to limiting development on public land and protecting endangered species.

But critics, many of them in the GOP, contend the law has spawned a nightmare of litigation as lawsuits are filed to stop or alter proposed projects. They contend the law has also produced "paralysis by analysis" as projects are delayed.

Luke Russell, director of environmental affairs for Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp., said "NEPA today has grown into a monster, devouring millions of dollars and years of time."

The law does not contain an adequate definition of "significant" environmental impacts, or deadlines for finishing studies, Russell said.

"The entire region's economy is throttled when projects never materialize and jobs are sent offshore," Russell said.

Inslee said that mining companies "want to make it easier to take our gold out of our mountains and not pay anything."

While natural resource industries like logging and

mining have long opposed the law, GOP lawmakers are mindful that many voters consider the environment a major priority.

"NEPA was visionary in its time," said U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris, R-Wash., a freshman who was appointed head of a task force studying whether the law should be changed.

But the law now covers dozens of regulations and has spawned 1,500 court battles, she said. The average environmental impact statement now runs 493 pages and costs \$500,000 to \$2 million to produce, she said.

"I consider myself an environmentalist," McMorris said. "We should consider if there is a better way to protect the environment, and not just have delay after delay."

Conservationists fear the congressional review is a backhanded way of weakening environmental protection laws by an administration that wants to drill in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

"We are worried this is a first step in undermining NEPA," said Mike Peterson of The Lands Council, a Spokane environmental group that picketed outside the hearing while supporters wore "I Support NEPA" stickers.

The task force will spend the next six months gathering information about NEPA and decide whether the law needs to be changed, and how. Five additional public meetings are scheduled around the country, although the times and places have not been set.

The task force of 11 Republicans and nine Democrats will prepare a report this fall. Legislation, if any, is not likely to be introduced until next year.

At the Spokane meeting, the invited list of speakers, which conservationists feared would all be NEPA critics, turned out to have fairly bland complaints. The hearing covered issues in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.

Thomas Jenson, who has worked as an attorney on NEPA matters for two decades, told lawmakers the problem was not the law but the way it was implemented, especially conflicts that are constantly framed as jobs versus wildlife.

NEPA was created to stop "myopic, dishonest and dumb government," Jenson said, and has largely succeeded. Conflicts arise when the values of one interest group conflict with those of another, and federal agencies cannot resolve the differences, he said.

Craig Urness of the Pacific Seafood Group said his company has a vested interest in preserving species, so it can continue fishing into the future. But he said the NEPA process takes so long that information becomes stale long before it can be acted upon.

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NATIONAL

‘Precious Doe’ gets a name four years later

BY MATT SEDENSKY
Associated Press Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The little girl was kicked and left to die, her head then cut off with a pair of hedge clippers. For four years, she went without even a name.

Then on Thursday, among the flowers and balloons at the memorial to the girl long known as Precious Doe, a handwritten sign announced the news: My name is Erica Michelle Marie Green.

Erica was just shy of 4 when she was found in 2001. Her mother, Michelle M. Johnson, 30, and stepfather Harrell Johnson, 25, have been charged with murder and endangering the welfare of a child.

Police said Thursday that Harrell Johnson admitted that under the influence of alcohol and the hallucinogenic drug PCP, he became angry with Erica when she refused to go to bed, grabbed her, kicked her and threw her to the ground, leaving her unconscious. After she died, he said he used hedge clippers to sever her head.

The Johnsons were not married at the time Erica was killed, but prosecutors refer to Harrell Johnson as her stepfather. The couple were being held in Oklahoma, where they live.

“We have closure,” police Chief James Corwin said. “The little girl that we’ve known for four years as Precious Doe has a name.”

Police said a tip enabled them to identify Erica, but they would not elaborate. A picture released by police showed her with big brown eyes and neat cornrows in her hair.

The girl’s body was found near an intersection on April 28, 2001. Days later, her head was found nearby, wrapped in a trash bag.

Police knocked on doors in the neighborhood and even went to the house where the Johnsons were staying, according to police records obtained by The Kansas City Star. The records show Michelle Johnson answered the door and told an officer that a suspicious black male had been wandering the neighborhood the previous night.

In the months after the child became known as Precious Doe, hundreds attend-

ed candlelight vigils, volunteered to answer witness hot lines and passed out fliers with an artist’s rendering of the girl. The FBI took blood samples from family members of missing black girls, and the case was featured on television’s “America’s Most Wanted.”

The break in the case apparently came after community activist Alonzo Washington, who has long championed efforts to find out who the little girl was, placed another advertisement seeking leads in a local paper.

“There’s something about it that just bothers me that a child could be thrown away and people forget about it,” said Washington, who has worked to raise awareness of missing black children.

Washington said a grandfather of one of the individuals involved in the case came forward, talking with him and detectives last weekend. He said the source, who had spoken to police before on the case, sent photographs of the child as well as hair samples from the child and the mother.

Police and prosecutors refused to confirm specifics or identify the source. Washington declined to be more specific.

Authorities said the little girl was killed in Kansas City, where the family had been staying with a friend. According to court papers, Harrell Johnson beat the girl one night in April 2001 and the couple left her unconscious on the floor for two days. They did not seek medical help, the mother said, because both had warrants out for their arrest.

The child died, and the couple carried the body to a church parking lot, then through the woods, where the stepfather cut the girl’s head off with hedge clippers, police said.

Johnson was being held on \$500,000 bail in her hometown of Muskogee, Okla., prosecutor Michael Sanders said. The prosecutor asked that her husband be held without bail and that the couple be extradited to Kansas City as soon as possible.

Oklahoma records show Michelle Johnson has convictions for theft and forgery. Harrell Johnson, being held in jail on unrelated charges, has convictions for several offenses, including assault with a dangerous weapon and possessing a sawed-off shotgun.

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NATIONAL



HIV researchers make promises for sick kids

BY JOHN SOLOMON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — To gain access to hundreds of HIV-infected foster children, federally funded researchers promised in writing to provide an independent advocate to safeguard the kids' well-being as they tested potent AIDS drugs. But most of the time, that special protection never materialized, an Associated Press review has found.

The research funded by the National Institutes of Health spanned the country. It was most widespread in the 1990s as foster care agencies sought treatments for their HIV-infected children that weren't yet available in the marketplace.

The practice ensured that foster children — mostly poor or minority — received care from world-class researchers at government expense, slowing their rate of death and extending their lives. But it also exposed a vulnerable population to the risks of medical research and drugs that were known to have serious side effects in adults and for which the safety for children was unknown.

The research was conducted in at least seven states — Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Colorado and Texas — and involved more than four dozen different studies. The foster children ranged from infants to late teens, according to interviews and government records.

Several studies that enlisted foster children reported that patients suffered side effects such as rashes, vomiting and sharp drops in infection-fighting blood cells, and one reported a "disturbing" higher death rate among children who took higher doses of a drug, records show.

The government provided special protections for child wards in 1983. They required researchers and their oversight boards to appoint independent advocates for any foster child enrolled in a narrow class of studies that involved greater than minimal risk and lacked the promise of direct benefit.

Some foster agencies, including those in Illinois and New York, required researchers to sign a document agreeing to provide the protection regardless of risks and benefits.

However, researchers and foster agencies told AP that foster children in AIDS drug trials often weren't given such advocates even though research institutions many times promised in writing to do so.

Illinois officials believe none of their nearly 200 foster children in AIDS studies got independent monitors. New York City could find records showing 142 — less than a third — of the 465 foster children in AIDS drug trials got such monitors even though city policy required them. The city has asked an outside firm to investigate.

Likewise, research facilities including Chicago's Children's Memorial Hospital and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore said they concluded they didn't provide advocates for foster kids.

Some foster children died during studies, but state or city agencies said they could find no records that any deaths were directly caused by experimental treatments.

Researchers typically secured permission to enroll foster children through city or state agencies. And they frequently exempted themselves from appointing advocates by concluding the research carried minimal risk and the child would benefit directly because the drugs already had been tried in adults.

"Our position is that advocates weren't needed," said Marilyn Castaldi, spokeswoman for Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York.

If they decline to appoint advocates under the federal law, researchers and their oversight boards must conclude that the experimental treatment affords the same or better risk-benefit possibilities than alternate treatments already in the marketplace. They also must abide by any additional protections required by state and local authorities.

Arthur Caplan, head of medical ethics at the University of Pennsylvania, said advocates should have been appointed for all foster children because researchers felt the pressure of a medical crisis and knew there was great uncertainty as to how children would react to AIDS medications that were often toxic for adults.

"It is exactly that set of circumstances that made it

absolutely mandatory to get those kids those advocates," Caplan said. "It is inexcusable that they wouldn't have an advocate for each one of those children."

"When you have the most vulnerable subjects imaginable — kids without parents — you really do have to come in with someone independent, who doesn't have a dog in this fight," he said.

Those who made the decisions say the research gave foster kids access to drugs they otherwise couldn't get. And they say they protected the children's interest by carefully explaining risks and benefits to state guardians, foster parents and the children themselves.

"I understand the ethical dilemma surrounding the introduction of foster children into trials," said Dr. Mark Kline, a pediatric AIDS expert at Baylor College of Medicine. He enrolled some Texas foster kids in his studies, and doesn't recall appointing advocates for them.

"To say as a group that foster children should be excluded from clinical trials would have meant excluding these children from the best available therapies at the time," he said. "From an ethical perspective, I never thought that was a stand I could take."

Illinois officials directly credit the decision to enroll HIV-positive foster kids with bringing about a decline in deaths — from 40 between 1989 and 1995 to only 19 since.

Some states declined to participate in medical experiments. Tennessee said its foster care rules generally prohibit enlisting children in such trials. California requires a judge's order. And Wisconsin "has absolutely never allowed, nor would we even consider, any clinical experiments with the children in our foster care system," spokeswoman Stephanie Marquis said.

Officials estimated that 5 percent to 10 percent of the 13,878 children enrolled in pediatric AIDS studies funded by NIH since the late 1980s were in foster care. More than two dozen Illinois foster children remain in studies today.

NIH, the government health research agency that funded the studies, did not track researchers to determine whether they appointed advocates. Instead, the decision was left to medical review boards made up of volunteers at each study site.

A recent Institute of Medicine study concluded those Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) were often over-

whelmed, dominated by scientists and not focused enough on patient protections.

The U.S. Office for Human Research Protections, created to protect research participants after the notorious Tuskegee syphilis studies on black men in the 1930s, is investigating the use of foster children in AIDS research. The office declined to discuss the probe.

AP's review found that if children were old enough — usually between 5 and 10 — they also were educated about the risks and asked to consent. Sometimes, foster parents or biological parents were consulted; other times not.

Research and foster agencies declined to make foster parents or children in the drug trials available for interviews, or to provide information about individual drug dosages, side effects or deaths, citing medical privacy laws.

Other families who participated in the same drug trials told AP their children mostly benefited but parents needed to carefully monitor potential side effects. Foster children, they said, need the added protection of an independent advocate.

"If they did not fulfill that requirement, how can you be sure the community participant really got the benefit and the informed consent that is needed," said Michelle Lopez, a New Jersey woman whose daughter has participated in drug trials.

"I was very concerned about that because the argument we are getting is the kids are getting better and we are enhancing their lives, but none of these drugs save these kids lives," she said.

Many studies that enlisted foster children involved early Phase I and Phase II research — the riskiest — to determine side effects and safe dosages so children could begin taking adult "cocktails," the powerful drug combinations that suppress AIDS but can cause bad reactions like rashes and organ damage.

Some of those drugs were approved ultimately for children, such as stavudine and zidovudine. Other medicines were not.

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NATIONAL

Need for speed stunted by electric problem

BY PAUL FOY
Associated Press Writer

WEST WENDOVER, Nev. — A British team's attempt to establish a new speed record for electric-powered vehicles was scrubbed Friday, the second day weather and mechanical problems foiled efforts.

Friday's early morning try for the record in the Nevada desert was scrapped because of an electrical problem in the drive controller, or the unit that controls the electrical motor.

"It's an electrical gremlin. It could be related to cold, damp temperatures in the Nevada desert," team member Colin Fallows said.

"It's just one of those things — never get involved in cars," said the other team member, Mark Newby.

Newby is to trying to eclipse the record for an electric car weighing more than 2,200 pounds by using a vehicle with 52 batteries and no mechanical gears.

They planned to ready the car on Friday for one last attempt at the record Saturday on a closed highway about 25 miles south of West Wendover.

Another group, racing street cars, was arriving to claim the closed state highway for Sunday, and the British team said it was running out of money to extend its stay.

Gusty winds and battery problems on

Thursday delayed the first attempt.

On Thursday, smaller auxiliary batteries for the car's electronic controls had lost a full charge, Newby said.

While those batteries were being recharged, winds that could blow the car off course picked up, forcing crew members to wait another day.

"It was a stupid, silly technical thing," Newby said of the battery glitch.

Nevada agreed to shut down a state highway for the torpedo-shaped car's attempt to top 300 mph — which would shatter the old mark of 245 mph, set by an American team in 1999 using a similarly streamlined car powered by thousands of "AA" batteries.

That record was set on Utah's nearby Bonneville Salt Flats, which are too wet at this time of year for speed racing.

An Ohio State University team said it deserved recognition for already having broken the 300 mph barrier — but the Buckeye Bullet got a push start to hoard battery power for higher speeds.

It averaged 314.9 mph over two runs.

Ohio State engineering student Isaac Harper said the British team is "six months too late."

Newby said he was operating under stricter protocols of the Federation Internationale de L'Automobile, the motor sports governing body, which did

not sanction or certify Ohio State's run last October on the Salt Flats.

Newby will get no push start, and he'll have to make two runs in less than an hour, swapping batteries in between.

Ohio State's turnaround took four hours.

Newby and Fallows, both Britons, accelerated their car to 190 mph on a practice run Wednesday and said they were confident of topping 300 mph — if the weather cooperates. Their car could skid out of control on a rain-slick highway.

The car uses compact, industrial motors and drives made by Swiss engineering company ABB Ltd.

Newby, 46, a pilot who does acrobatic maneuvers, will drive the car. Fallows, 54, a retired Royal Air Force propulsion technician, designed the car.

Together they assembled the vehicle in

a barn in the English countryside, using their own money from home equity loans.

"We think that at some point in the future, all cars will be electric, and we want to show you can go fast in an electric car," Newby said.

The "emotion" car has no mechanical gears, which are useful for acceleration but limit torque at top speeds. The car, using a variable speed transmission, is designed to top 300 mph on a pair of motors than can turn out 500 horsepower — as much as a 2005 Chevrolet Corvette with a 7-liter, V8 engine.

Fallows said there's no great prize if the team succeeds.

"Record breaking is the only business that when you achieve your goal, you're redundant," he said. "You wait for the next guy to break it. Then you can start over."

Forest Service considers outsourcing information jobs

BY BECKY BOHRER
Associated Press Writer

BILLINGS, Mont. — Commercial public relations firms could soon handle some PR duties for the U.S. Forest Service, a watchdog group says.

The federal agency is studying whether "competitive sourcing" — putting certain positions and responsibilities out for bids — would make sense from a cost-savings and efficiency standpoint, according to documents provided by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

The study is expected to be completed by June 30 and involves the agency's communications field. Communications jobs include public affairs officers, technical writers and graphic artists.

The Forest Service Council, the federal union representing agency employees, said about 700 positions will be looked at and that the Forest Service expects to pick 100 of those to do "competitive sourcing competitions."

PEER claims hundreds more agency positions could be subject to bidding next year.

"This program, in general, threatens to bring much greater corporate involvement in the work of public agencies," Jeff Ruch,

executive director of PEER, said Friday.

Ruch said Congress stalled efforts last year to outsource jobs within the Forest Service and National Park Service but that those restrictions have since ended.

Bill Dougan, president of the Forest Service Council, questioned whether the Forest Service was ready to do a thorough study in a relatively short timeframe.

Paula Nelson, media officer in the regional office of the Forest Service in Missoula, said the idea behind the study is trying to make government more efficient.

"It will be a data-gathering process on what we do. And then it will look at, is there a better way to do what we do?" she said.

Efficiency reviews have been occurring for years, she said, but "change is always confusing. It can be stressful."

Ruch said having private firms take on responsibilities within a government agency could lead to less accountability.

"Civil servants can be personally punished for not telling the truth, and that's not the case with contractors," he said. Outsourcing public information work "risks putting a premium on spin at the expense of candor," Ruch said.

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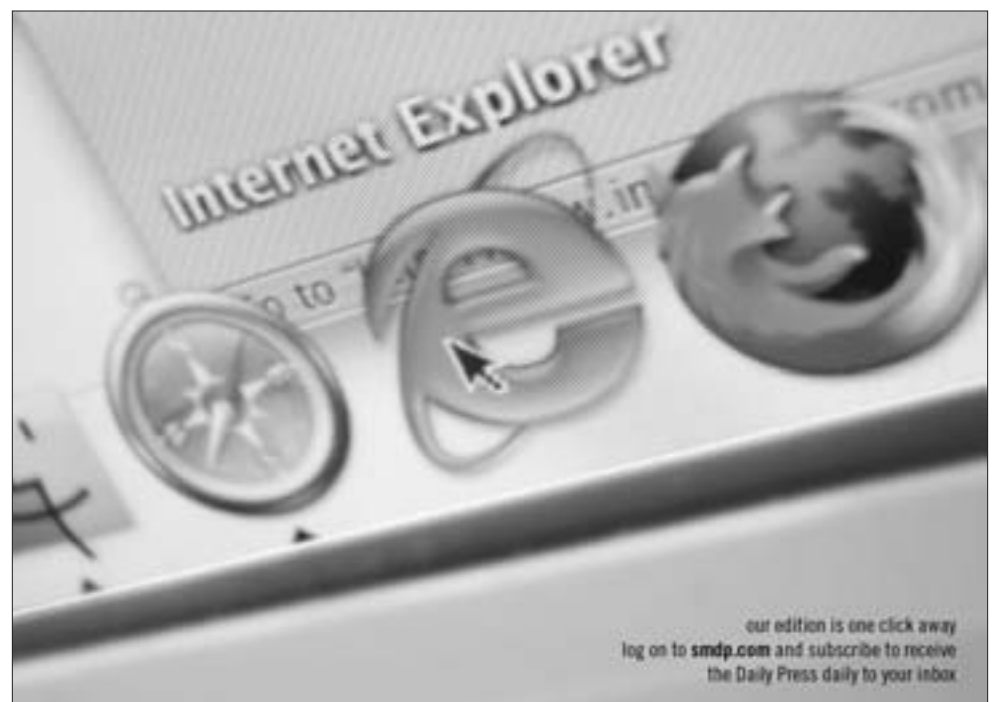
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NATIONAL



Employers step it up, adding 274,000 jobs

BY JEANNINE AVERSA
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Hiring around the country picked up briskly in April, with employers boosting payrolls by 274,000 and raising hopes of better days ahead for jobseekers and the economy as a whole. The unemployment rate held steady at 5.2 percent.

The latest snapshot of the nation's employment climate, released by the Labor Department on Friday, eased fears about the economy getting stuck in the soggy spot it hit in March.

April's payroll growth marked an improvement from the 146,000 new jobs created in March. Economists also were heartened to see that revised figures showed employers added 93,000 more jobs in February and March combined than the government previously estimated.

"The economy appears to be snapping back and the soft patch has probably evaporated," said Lynn Reaser, chief economist at Bank of America Capital Management. "Jobseekers can now look forward to a more receptive climate. We are seeing jobs open up over a wide swath of industries."

Payroll gains were widespread. Retailers, bars and restaurants, health care

providers, construction companies and financial services all showed employment rising. Factories, however, lost jobs for the second straight month. Clothing, automobile, food and furniture makers were among the manufacturers where employment declined.

"Manufacturing sectors shedding jobs are those still facing stiff import competition, particularly from Asia," where currencies are kept artificially low against the U.S. dollar, putting U.S. manufacturers at a big competitive disadvantage, said David Huether, chief economist at the National Association of Manufacturers. High energy costs also are putting a strain on manufacturers, he said.

Still, April's growth in overall hiring suggests companies are optimistic about the economy's prospects despite expensive energy bills, analysts said. The 274,000 net number of jobs added last month was roughly 100,000 more than economists had expected.

Consumers, on the other hand, appear to be feeling less buoyant about the economy. An AP-Ipsos consumer confidence index dropped to 78.2 in early May, the lowest reading since October 2003, as surging energy bills and higher borrowing costs weighed on consumers' psyches.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones indus-

trials gained just 5.02 to close at 10,345.40 as the stronger-than-expected jobs report made investors fret about the prospects of more aggressive rate action by the Federal Reserve.

To combat inflation, the Fed boosted interest rates on Tuesday by one-quarter percentage point to 3 percent. It was the eighth increase of that size since the Fed began to tighten credit last June. The Fed is expected to keep pushing up rates through much of this year.

Workers' average hourly earnings rose in April to \$16, up 0.3 percent from March's \$15.95. From an economic point of view that suggests inflation pressures are mild, not worrisome, analysts said. For workers, though, wage gains are not keeping pace with inflation, another factor that may be damping consumer confidence, economists said.

"Families are feeling the squeeze," said Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan, however, credited the president's "pro-growth policies" for the hiring pickup.

For people looking for jobs, challenges remain. There were 7.7 million people unemployed in April, with the average duration of 19.6 weeks without work.

However, the share of the working-age

population working or actively seeking a job rose in April to 66 percent. That was up from 65.8 percent in March, which was a nearly 17 year low first reached in January.

Economists also were encouraged to see that the work week increased to 33.9 hours in April, after five straight months of being flat. They said that may be a sign hiring will continue to improve.

The positive news on jobs comes after some earlier reports suggested the economy had lost momentum.

The government reported last week that in the first quarter of 2005, the economy grew at a 3.1 percent annual rate, its slowest pace in two years as high energy prices crimped consumer and business spending.

Oil prices, which set a new all-time high of \$57.27 a barrel at the beginning of April, have retreated somewhat since then.

Friday's jobs report, along with news Thursday that shoppers gave a modest boost to retail sales in April, made some analysts feel that economic growth will now rebound solidly.

"The U.S. jobs machine has finally shifted into a higher gear and will likely drive strong economic growth through the rest of the year," said Bill Cheney, chief economist at John Hancock Financial Services.

Northwestern U.S. has higher risk of mad cow exposure

BY LIBBY QUAID
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — There is still a risk, though slight, of mad cow disease in the United States, and it is greatest in the three Northwestern states bordering Canada, according to Agriculture Department investigators.

The investigators, after tracing the history of the four cows with the disease in North America, said the U.S. has minimized the risk by banning cattle remains in feed, the primary way mad cow disease is believed to spread.

Three infected Canadian cows, including one from Alberta that turned up in the United States, probably ate feed contaminated with the same infected remains, and a fourth may have as well, investigators said.

A team of four epidemiologists from

the agency's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service went to Canada to review the country's investigations into the four cows confirmed to have mad cow disease, the common name for bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE.

An Agriculture Department spokesman said Friday that the findings affirm the agency's plan to reopen the Canadian border to cattle shipments, which were banned after Canada's first case of mad cow disease in May 2003. A federal judge in Montana has ruled the border must remain closed while a lawsuit brought by ranchers makes its way through the legal system.

"The safeguards in place in Canada, in combination with our own domestic safeguards, have really been shown to be an effective means for protecting consumers and livestock," spokesman Ed Loyd said.

People who eat meat contaminated with BSE can contract variant

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a fatal brain disease that incubates for years after exposure. Since the mid-1990s, the disease has killed nearly 150 people, most of them in Britain.

In its report, the team said the northwestern United States, particularly Washington, Idaho and Montana, could be considered at higher risk of exposure to BSE because it imported a substantial amount of cattle from western Canada along with a small amount of high-risk meat and bone meal.

However, they said the feed ban and other measures "have effectively minimized the risk of transmission or amplification of the BSE agent."

The infected North American cows were all born in Canada, although one was diagnosed with mad cow disease after being shipped to Washington state. All four cows appear to have been infected by

feed contaminated with infected cattle remains either before or soon after Canada and the United States banned remains in feed in 1997, the report said.

Investigators said three of the four cattle probably ate feed that had contaminants from the same source, a rendering plant not identified in the report. Rendering plants take inedible byproducts, process them into meat and bone meal and ship the meal to feed mills and farms.

The rendering plant shipped meat and bone meal into the United States, but the report said it didn't go into cattle feed. Most of it was exported to Asia and the rest was added to poultry feed, the report said.

Investigators couldn't pin down a link between the rendering plant and the fourth infected cow, although they said it was born in close proximity to the other three and was exposed at about the same time.



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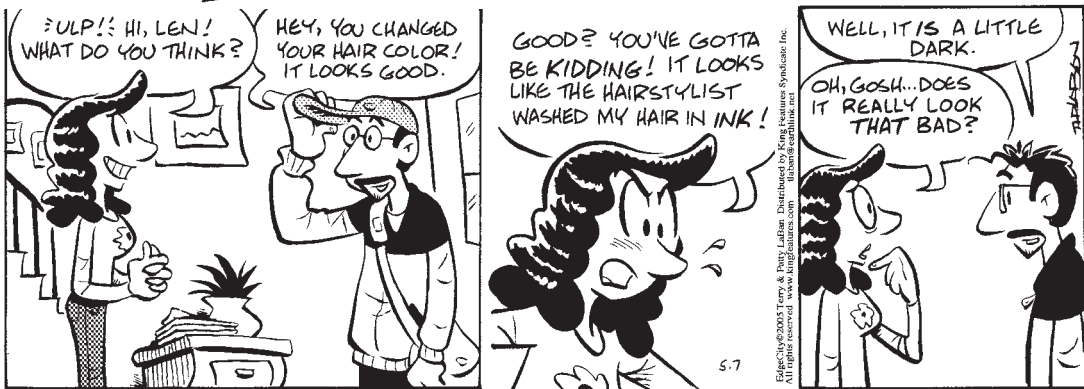


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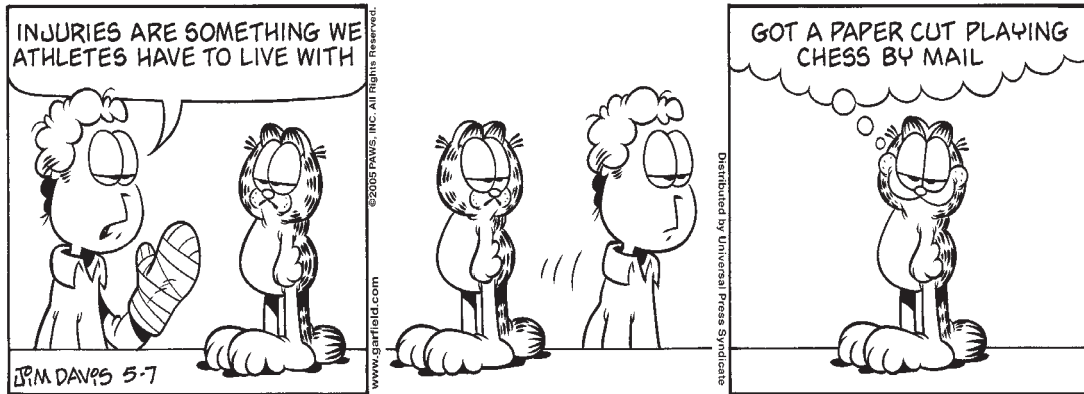
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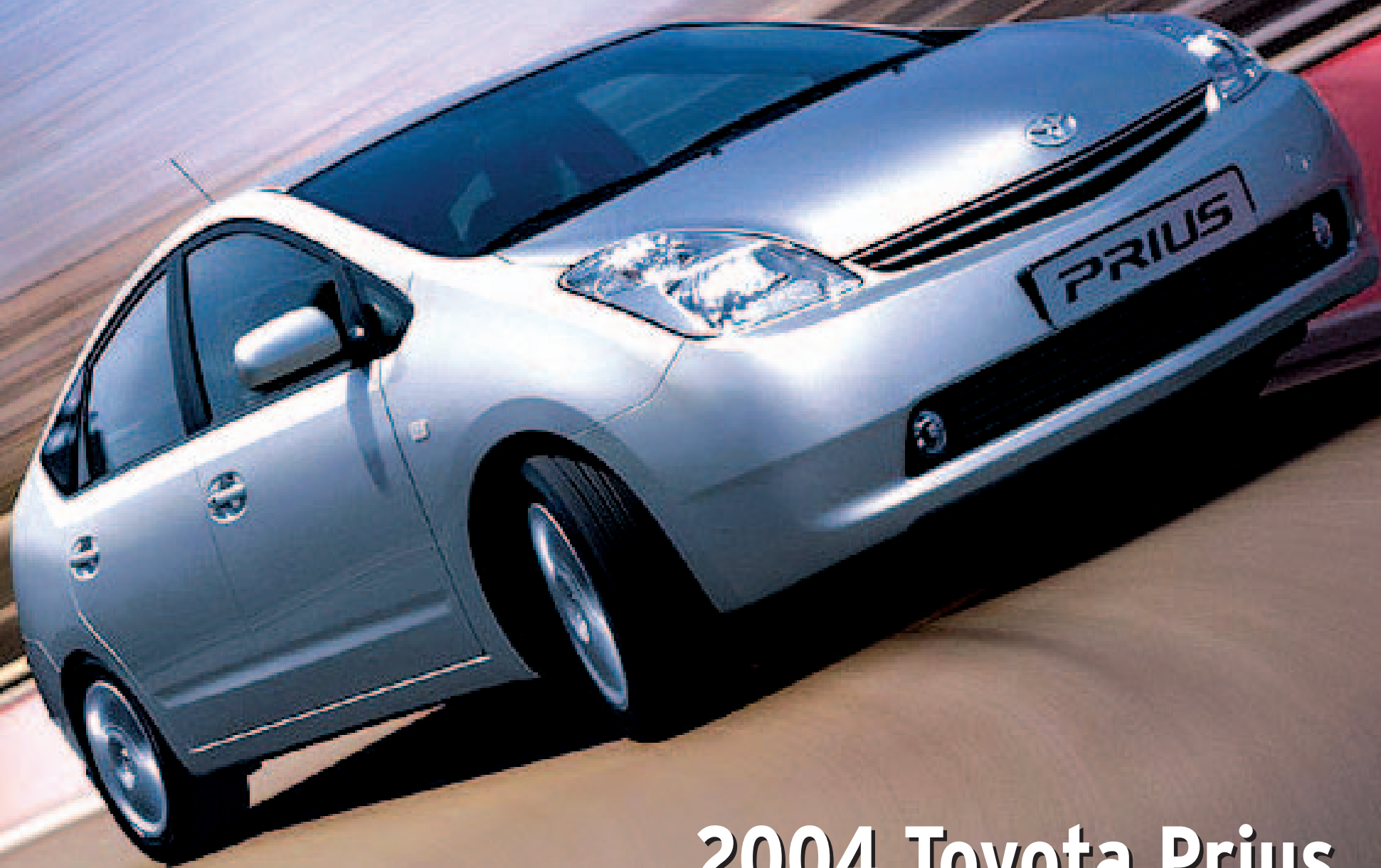
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